

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) India's foreign exchange reserves, including gold and Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), amounted to US \$ 26.42 billion at the end of March 1997 compared with US \$ 21.69 billion at the end of March 1996 and US \$ 25.19 billion at the end of March 1995.

(c) The rise in foreign exchange reserves, *ceteris paribus*, by increasing the money supply in the economy, is a potential source of pressure on the general level of prices. The expansionary impact of the recent spurt in foreign exchange reserves on money supply and prices has been countered by a tight monetary policy. On the other hand, a higher level of foreign exchange reserves strengthens the balance of payments and the exchange rate, and boosts the confidence of India's international investors.

(d) Fiscal policy in the short and medium terms, in conjunction with monetary policy, is geared towards achieving a rapid growth in incomes and productive employment in a environment of price stability. The fiscal strategy includes measures for reduction in fiscal deficit to a sustainable level, an comprehensive incentive-oriented tax reform programme and expenditure reform strategy that help to promote domestic savings and investment in certain key sectors.

Development of Silk Industry

612. SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Action Plan of the Government for the development of Silk Industry in North-Eastern States, particularly in Assam; and

(b) the steps being taken for necessary research, extension, infrastructural and training support for development of sericulture in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) A North-East Action Plan for development of mulberry and muga sericulture in the North-Eastern region is being implemented in collaboration with the State Governments from 1995-96. The project includes mulberry and non-mulberry components and the entire non-mulberry components of Rs. 3.59 crores is met by Central Silk Board (CSB). In the mulberry component of Rs. 12.89 crores, CSB bears Rs. 6.03 crores. The project is to be implemented over a period of 3 years from 1995-96 and aims at development of 7500 acres of mulberry plantation and all acres of non-mulberry plantation. The CSB's expenditure in North-East Action Plan upto 31.3.1997 has been Rs. 3.08 crores.

The Assam component of Action Plan involves an outlay of Rs. 5.02 crores of which, CSB will bear Rs. 4.56 crores while remaining Rs. 0.46 crore will be born by Government of Assam. The mulberry sericulture development programme in Assam is to develop 2000 areas of mulberry covering 4000 farmers, supply of 1000 silkworm rearing kits, providing assistance to reeling, establishing of one Research Extension Centre, one Project Office, five

Technical Service Centres, training to 4000 farmers and 40 reelers. Besides, it also aims for developing 20 acres of Basic Seed Farm, 16.4 acres of nucleus farm and mulberry nursery.

The programme envisaged under non-mulberry sector in Assam is to augment 945 acres of muga food plants, establishment of two Muga Seed Production Centres, training 140 muga silk reelers, assistance four muga cooperative societies and supply of muga silk reeling machines. For ericulture, the programme covered is augmentation of 222 acres eri food plants, setting up one Silkworm Seed Production Centre, assisting 5 societies for marketing and processing eri cocoons.

(b) In order to supplement the efforts of the State Government the following infrastructural facilities for research & development, training and extension support have been established by the Central Silk Board in Assam for development of sericulture:-

I. Under Normal Plan Programme

MULBERRY

1. Regional Sericulture Research Station, Jorhai.
2. Research Extension Centre, Mangaldoi.
3. Sericulture Training Schools, Jorhat.

MUGA

1. Central Muga Research & Training Institute, Ladoigarh (Jorhat), being established.
2. Regional Muga Research Station, Boko
3. Muga Research Extension Centre, Sibsagar.
4. Muga Raw Material Bank, Sibsagar (with 2 sub-depots at Dhakukhana and Guwahati)

ERI

1. Eri Research & Training Institute, Mebdipather, Meghalaya (Services Assam also)
2. Research Extension Centre, Diphu.

TASAR

1. Basic Seed Multiplication & Training Centre, (Oak tasar) Umrangsu.

II Under the National Sericulture Project

1. One Mulberry Basic Seed Production Farm-cum-Grainage, Rawriah.
2. Nine Technical Service Centres.
3. One Reeling Demonstration-cum-Training Centre.
4. Two Cocoon Drying Chambers.
5. One Cocoon Market-cum-Cocoon testing and Grading Unit.